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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 VO-03 CIAE-00 FBIE-00 INSE-00
NSAE-00 EB-07 DODE-00 INR-07 SCA-01 TRSE-00 CG-00
DOTE-00 SS-15 NSC-05 L-03 /054 W
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R 011538Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9363
INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
MARAD WASHDC
USDOC WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: OCLR, CVIS, NO, UR, US
SUBJECT: CREW LIST VISA PROBLEMS

REF: STATE 141737

SUMMARY: MARITIME MINISTRY OFFICIAL TOLD EMBASSY OFFICERS JULY 1 THAT NO FURTHER PROBLEMS SHOULD ARISE IN GRANTING SHORE LEAVE TO CREWS OF US VESSELS IF CREW LIST VISA REQUEST IS MADE SEVEN DAYS BEFORE SCHEDULED PORT ARRIVAL. OFFICIAL SAID THAT CREW LIST VISAS WOULD BE SENT TO SOVIET PORT IMMIGRATION AUTHORITIES TELEGRAPHICALLY RATHER THAN BY MAIL. OFFICIAL CLAIMED RECENT PROBLEMS OF GRANTING SHORE LEAVE TO US CREWS WERE DUE TO INADEQUATE NOTICE BY US SHIPOWNERS, BUT WE POINTED TO CASES WHERE SHORE LEAVE NOT GRANTED EVEN WHEN VISA OBTAINED OVER SEVEN DAYS BEFOREHAND. END SUMMARY.

1. CONSULAR COUNSELOR AND E/C COUNSELOR, ACCOMPANIED BY EMBOFFS, MET JULY 1 PER STATE REQUEST (REFTEL) WITH IGOR AVERIN, CHIEF OF FOREIGN RELATIONS DIVISION OF SOVIET
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MINISTRY OF MARITIME FLEET. WE TOLD AVERIN THAT VIST WAS IN RELATION TO RECENT FAILURE OF SOME US SHIP CREWS TO RECEIVE PERMISSION FOR SHORE LEAVE AT SOVIET PORTS. ALTHOUGH US SHIPOWNERS HAD PROVIDED CREW LISTS TO SOVIET EMBASSY OR CONSULAR POSTS SEVEN DAYS BEFORE SCHEDULED PORT CALL, AS STIPULATED IN PROTOCOL TO MARITIME AGREEMENT, FORWARDING OF CREW LISTS BY MAIL HAD

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PREVENTED TIMELY NOTIFICATION OF SOVIET PORT AUTHORITIES.
WE REQUESTED THAT SOVIETS, IN INTEREST OF RECIPROCITY,
ADOPT TELEGRAPHIC PROCEDURES USED BY USG IN HANDLING
SOVIET CREW LIST VISAS.

2. AVERIN REPLIED THAT RECENT DIFFICULTIES WITH US CREW
LISTS WERE DUE TO US SHIPOWNERS' FAILURE TO PRESENT LISTS
SEVEN DAYS IN ADVANCE. SOVIET IMMIGRATION AUTHORITIES HAD
DECIDED IN THE SPRING THAT THEY COULD NOT ACCEPT SUCH
PRACTICE. IF SEVEN-DAY NOTICE WERE ADHERED TO IN THE
FUTURE, AVERIN ASSERTED, NO FURTHER PROBLEMS WOULD ARISE.
HE SAID THAT CREW LIST VISAS ARE SENT TO SOVIET PORT
AUTHORITIES BY TELEGRAPH. (COMMENT: A POSSIBLE DIS-
CREPANCY BETWEEN MINISTRY AND SOVIET EMBASSY UNDERSTANDING
OF THE SITUATION WAS SUGGESTED BY AVERIN'S CLAIM THAT THE
SOVIETS WERE ALREADY CABLING US CREW LIST VISAS, WHEREAS
SOVIET EMBASSY MARITIME ATTACHE DZHAVAD (REFTEL) HAD
SAIDTHEY WERE NOT).

3. E/C COUNSELOR SAID THAT USE OF TELEGRAPHIC PROCEDURES
BY BOTH SIDES WAS THE KEY TO THE PROBLEM. THE INTEREST
OF NEITHER SIDE WOULD BE SERVED IF THE SOVIETS DID NOT
USE THIS PROCEDURE, PERHAPS OBLIGING USG TO RECONSIDER
ITS OWN PROCEDURE. AVERIN DID NOT THINK THIS WAS THE
KEY, BUT REITERATED THAT SO LONG AS SEVEN-DAY REQUIREMENT
WAS MET, HE FORESAW NO DIFFICULTIES. AVERIN REFERRED TO
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CONVERSATIONS ON SUBJECT WITH OTHER CONCERNED AGENCIES,
INCLUDING IMMIGRATION OFFICIALS AND MFA CONSULAR ADMINISTRATION.
WHEN E/C COUNSELOR RAISED PROBLEM OF US CREWS BEING GRANTED
SHORE LEAVE AT FIRST SOVIET PORT-OF-CALL BUT NOT AT A
SECOND, AVERIN SAID THAT MARITIME MINISTRY HAD CHECKED WITH
IMMIGRATION AUTHORITIES ABOUT SUCH CASES AND CONVEYED
IMPRESSION THAT SIMILAR INCIDENTS WERE NOT EXPECTED IN
THE FUTURE.

4. AVERIN RAISED BUT DID NOT PRESS EARLIER SOVIET
PROPOSAL (REFTEL) THAT VISA REQUIREMENTS BE WAIVED FOR
BOTH SIDES. WE REPLIED THAT THIS WOULD
CONFLICT WITH US LAW BUT PROMISED STATE RESPONSE TO
PROPOSAL.

5. WE RAISED PASSENGER VISA ISSUE WITH AVERIN,
WHO SAID THAT HIS MINISTRY WAS NOT INVOLVED BUT ACCEPTED
COPY OF SOVIET EMBASSY LETTER RECEIVED FROM LYKES BROS.
COUNSELOR OF CONSULAR AFFAIRS WILL DISCUSS THIS ISSUE WITH MA
OFFICIALS NEXT WEEK TO RECONFIRM UNDERSTANDING ON PROCESSING
OF CREW LIST VISAS.

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6. COMMENT: WE BELIEVE THAT THE MARITIME MINISTRY MAY HAVE WEIGHED IN TO EASE RESTRICTIVE POLICY BY IMMIGRATION AUTHORITIES. DIFFICULTIES MAY HAVE BEEN CAUSING MARITIME MINISTRY ITS OWN PROBLEMS, AND IMPLIED WARNING US MIGHT RETALIATE APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN EFFECTIVE. ON THE OTHER HAND, DESPITE AVERIN'S ASSURANCES, THE EVIDENT CONTRAST BETWEEN HIS LINE AND THAT GIVEN DEPARTMENT BY SOVIET EMBASSY MARITIME OFFICIALS SUGGEST THAT IT MAY BE PREMATURE TO CONCLUDE THAT PROBLEM IS FULLY SOLVED.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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SAS ID: 1984625
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CREW LIST VISA PROBLEMS
TAGS: OCLR, CVIS, NO, UR, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/4ce17f72-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
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